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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH ; Boston, Dec. 12, 1888.—Dr. J. W. Warren read the report of the Committee on Mediumistic Phenomena, of which the following is the substance:

“Your committee desires to report a moderate progress in the investigations pertaining to its work. During the year the committee, as such, has undertaken the careful examination of the results obtained by one well-known trance medium. We were aided very materially by the generous co-operation of the medium. Thus far we have been able to have only light on 10 sittings, stenographically reported. The results thus obtained are not of such a character as to warrant any very decided judgment as to the nature of the phenomena under examination, but they throw some light on the questions involved. An extension of the investigation would be very desirable, provided a sufficient amount of money could be placed at our disposal. As to materializing or etherrealizing mediums, it is learned that seven—nearly every one of whom had been highly recommended to our special attention—have come to grief here in Boston during the past two or three years. Still, we are ready to examine these phenomena on the receipt of tangible experiences on the part of trustworthy persons, provided we are permitted to impose such conditions as seem to us reasonable and necessary.”

Secretary Richard Hodgson read the report of the Committee on Thought Transference. In the experiments made by this committee, an attempt was made to “will” the subject to name a number selected by the other party to the experiment. By pure chance, one might be expected to guess 10 numbers out of 100 correctly, but the results varied in each series of 100 from 10 to 28. Out of 3000 numbers selected, 584 were guessed correctly, instead of 300, which fact, the members of the committee think, points to some other influence than chance. It was noticed that when the right guess was made in the first place, the subject displayed no desire to change it, and it was only in cases where the first guess was wrong that the subject showed any uncertainty in announcing it, or attempted to change it afterward.

Prof. J. Royce read the report on phantasms and presentiments. He declared that, in his opinion, the methods of research adopted by the committee on phantasms and presentiments had been justified by the results obtained. After he had stated the subdivisions he had made of his subject, he gave his special attention to what he called “pseudo-presentiments” and to coincidences that seem to have some bearing on telepathy. Under the head of pseudo-presentiments he cited a number of cases where individuals, after events have happened, persuade themselves that they had presentiments of the events before they occurred. He also spoke of the feeling people often have, when visiting a strange place, of “having been there before.” These hallucinations, he said, were attributable to surprises which make so strong an impression upon a man’s mind as

to lead him to think that the subject has long had a lodgment in his brain. He spoke of three cases of telepathic coincidences, supported by documentary evidence, but these were all of them mentioned in his report of last year. These cases he considers very valuable for the purposes of the society, but as to the cause for them he expressed no opinion.

Dr. James made a short speech, setting forth the aims and needs of the society. It was the intention to extend the work of the society, and that specially interesting psychical cases in all parts of the country were to be scientifically investigated. Information in regard to alleged haunted houses was often received, many of which the society was unable to investigate, owing to a lack of funds, but there were over 700 cases now being investigated. The society, in self-defence, would be forced to publish more than it had ever done before, and all these matters required money. The new members, he said, had more than supplied the loss by withdrawals, so that the society was growing a little.

BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON.—December, 15, 1888.—The following communications were read: Prof. Lester F. Ward, "Fortuitous Variation as Illustrated by the Genus *Eupatorium*, with exhibition of specimens;" Prof. C. V. Riley, "Note on a Human Parasite;" Mr. E. S. Burgess, "*Aster shortii* near Washington."

December 29.—The following communications were read: Dr. Theobald Smith, "Contagion and Infection from a Biological Standpoint;" Mr. F. A. Lucas, "Notes on the Diseases of Menagerie Animals;" Mr. Th. Holm, "Notes on *Hydrocotyle americana* Linn.;" Dr. Cooper Curtice, "Notes on the Sheep Tick, *Melophagus ovinus* Linn."